National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River
RR2 Box 2428
Beach Lake, PA 18405
570-685-4871
www.nps.gov/upde/home.htm

For additional information on sites along the D&H Canal route, please contact the following:

The D&H Canal Museum
P.O. Box 23
High Falls, NY 12440
845-687-9311
www.canalmuseum.org

The Neversink Valley Area Museum
Hoag Road D&H Canal Park
P.O. Box 263
Cuddebackville, NY 12729
845-754-8870
www.neversinkmuseum.org

The Minisink Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 659
125-133 West Main Street
Port Jervis, NY 12771
845-856-2375
www.minisink.org

Wayne County Historical Society
810 Main Street
P.O. Box 446
Honesdale, PA 18431
570-253-3240
www.waynehistorypa.org

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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Upper Delaware
Scenic and Recreational River

The D&H Towpath Trail

Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct

Lackawaxen, PA - Minisink Ford, NY

Come discover a path to the past! Experience natural beauty and local history while you explore along the banks of the Delaware River.

The Delaware and Hudson Canal

The **Delaware & Hudson Canal**, completed in 1828, is distinguished as one of the first million dollar private enterprises in America. Threading its way over 108 miles, the canal needed 108 locks to overcome 1,073 feet of elevation change. Built primarily to transport anthracite coal, the canal connected the mines in Northeastern Pennsylvania to a rapidly growing New York City which was in need of an inexpensive and reliable fuel source.

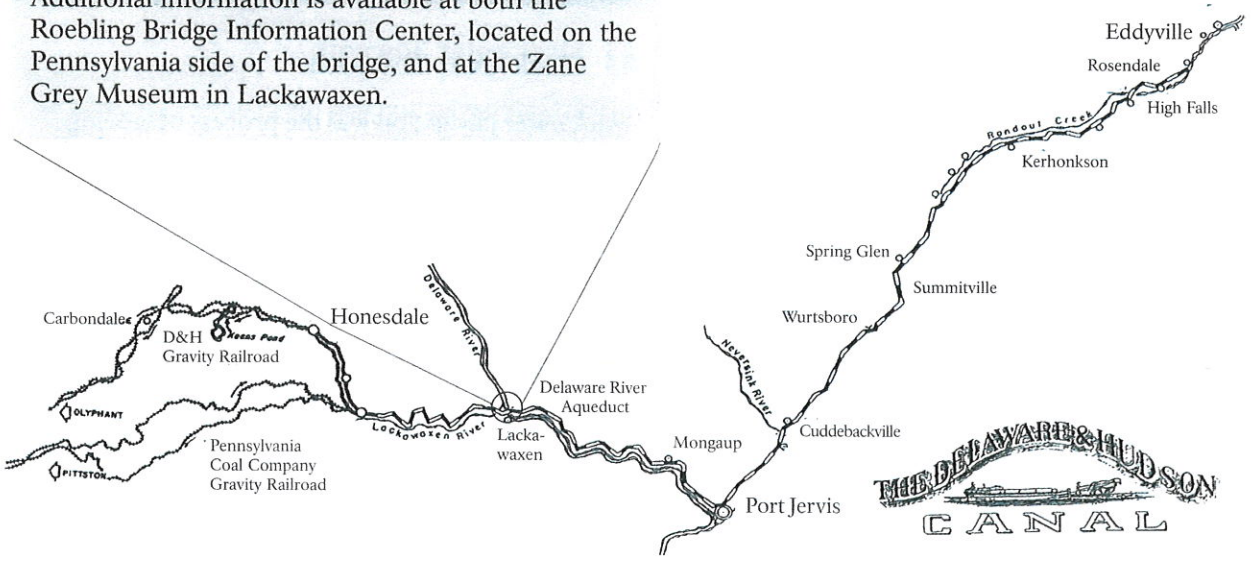
The D&H Canal Company used a specially designed gravity railroad to transport millions of tons of anthracite over Moosic Mountain to Honesdale, Pennsylvania. In Honesdale, the coal was then transferred from rail cars to waiting canal boats. Pulled by mules, the canal boats averaged 1-3 miles per hour and completed their journey to Eddyville, New York, in 7-10 days.

German-born engineer John A. Roebling designed four suspension aqueducts to carry canal boats over rivers and streams. Roebling would use similar technology to build the Brooklyn Bridge. Of these four aqueducts only the one spanning the Delaware River remains. Remnants of the other three exist near the towns of High Falls, Lackawaxen, and Cuddebackville.

The canal was eventually abandoned in 1898, in favor of a more modern means of transporting goods-the steam locomotive. Today, scattered portions of this once profitable canal serve as a reminder of a unique period of local history and as a legacy to the determination and skill of the engineers, laborers, and stone workers who built and maintained the canal without the aid of modern machinery.

You are Here

Completed in 1848, the Delaware Aqueduct or Roebling Bridge, as it is now known, is the oldest existing wire suspension bridge in the United States. Now managed by the National Park Service as part of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the bridge is only one of the many cultural and recreational resources available to area visitors. Additional information is available at both the Roebling Bridge Information Center, located on the Pennsylvania side of the bridge, and at the Zane Grey Museum in Lackawaxen.



D&H Towpath Trail

Welcome to the D&H Towpath Trail.

Approximately one-third of a mile long, the Towpath Trail follows the path of the Delaware & Hudson Canal. Mostly flat, the trail is an easy walk for those interested in seeing remnants of two different junctures in canal history. There are 7 stops at points of cultural and technological interest - each described in this guide.

A Landscape Revealed

The panoramic view of the landscape and map included in this guide provides a historical look of the Lackawaxen area after the completion of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Aqueducts in 1848. Prior to the building of the two aqueducts, crossing the Delaware River was a complicated event full of obstacles and prone to delay. The addition of Roebling's aqueducts on the D&H Canal saved two days of travel on a round trip.

Trail Smarts:

D&H Canal Towpath Trail

Length:
2/3 mile round trip

Classification:
Easy

Duration:
Allow 45 minutes

Restrictions:

- No bikes or motorized vehicles
- Pets must be leashed
- Watch your step, the path is uneven
- Watch out for ticks and poison ivy
- Not a designated river access
- Do not litter

Please stay on the path. The Towpath Trail occupies a narrow corridor of public land. Please respect our neighbors' privacy and stay out of restricted areas.

Section A

1 Slackwater Dam

The slackwater dam at Lackawaxen had two lives. Originally, the dam created a large pool of slow moving water that aided early canal boats crossing the Delaware River. After the creation of the Delaware Aqueduct, the dam was maintained as a means of regulating water levels in the canal. Remnants of the dam can be seen directly across from you and are marked by orange buoys during the summer months.

#2 Guard Lock

This small point of land you are standing on was once the site of the Delaware guard lock. Exposed beams just off shore still mark the foundation of the lock. Initially the means by which the canal boats entered and exited the pre-1848 canal, the guard lock became vital as a control mechanism for feeding water to the entire length of the canal from Lackawaxen to the Mongaup.

Section C

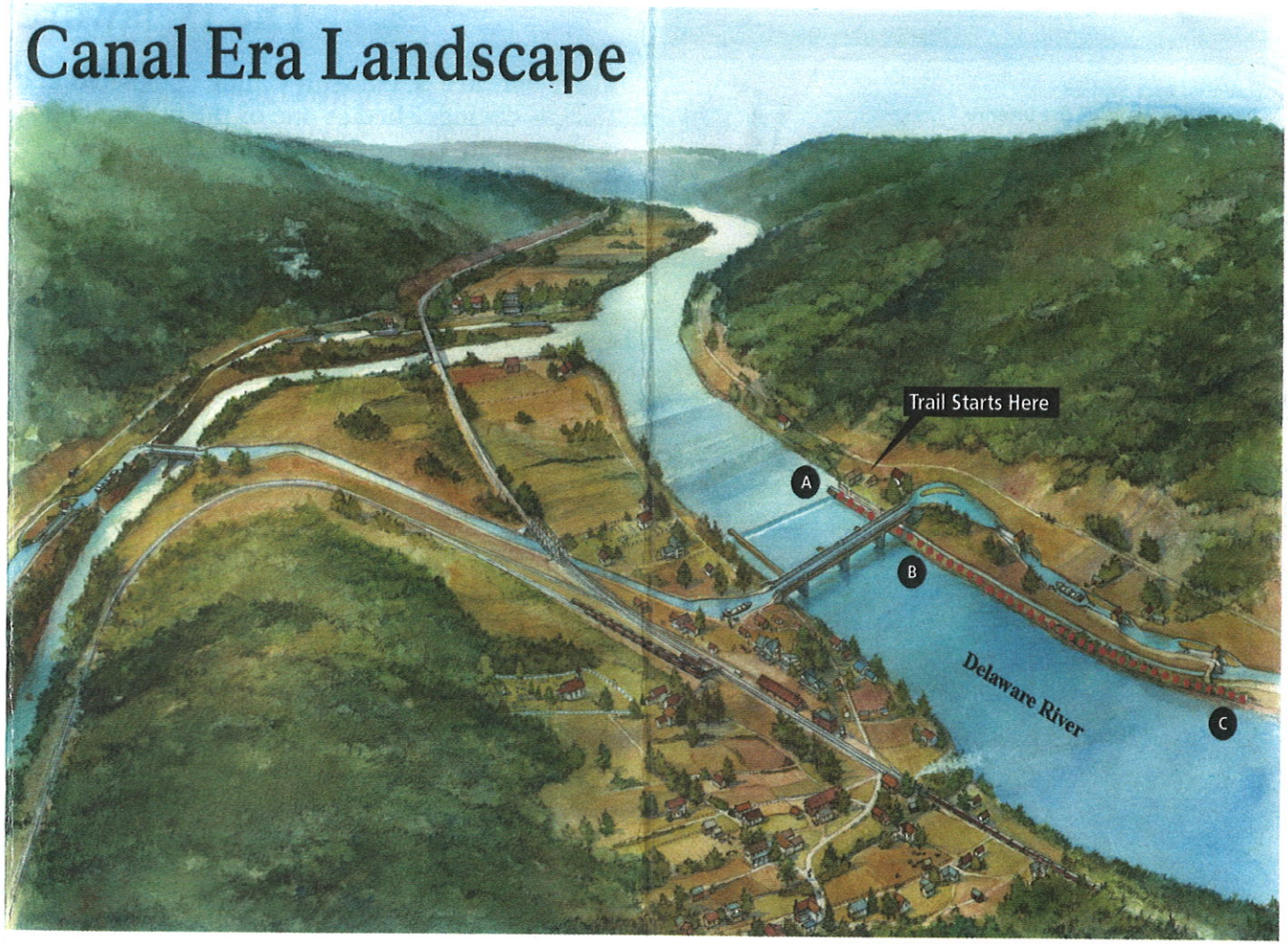
#6 Canal Remnants

The section of canal you are standing on was constructed in 1828. Initially designed to carry boats, it was turned into a feeder canal after the building of the aqueduct. Even with safeguards, flooding and washouts of the canal structures were common and caused expensive delays. The unpredictable nature of river flows and seasonal fluctuations had a direct impact on the efficiency of the canal.

#7 Canal Junction

After the creation of the aqueduct, canal boats had to overcome a 30 foot elevation difference between the bridge and the level of the original canal. This was done by passing through 3 locks that raised or lowered the canal boats an average of 10 feet per lock. The junction you are standing at marks the point where the new section of canal met the old.

Canal Era Landscape



#3 Slackwater Towpath

Slackwater navigation was the process of moving canal boats across large river crossings. The stone wall that lines the bank directly in front of you is a remnant of the towpath that mules walked along as they moved between the guard lock and the rope ferry at the mouth of the Lackawaxen River. This open water crossing was one of the most time consuming and dangerous sections of the pre-1848 canal. Spring runoff often made the river unnavigable. Unable to cross, canal boats would be forced to sit idle on either side of the river until the water receded enough to safely ferry across. Delays could often exceed a week and proved costly.

Section B

#4 The Icebreakers

Perhaps the most imposing features of the Delaware Aqueduct are the three large icebreakers directly across from you. These structures were built to protect the spans of the bridge from the tremendous ice floes of early spring.

#5 Wurtz and Lord Foundation Stone

This engraved stone sits midway up the wall in front of you and commemorates John Wurtz, the president of the D&H Canal Company at the time of the aqueduct's construction, and the chief engineer, Russel F. Lord, who presided over the construction of the aqueduct. Although an important contractor, Roebling's name was not included.